

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 AGR-10 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FMC-02 SAL-01

CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04 OC-05 CCO-00 CAB-05 FAA-00

TRSE-00 /060 W

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R 021459Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9808

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

UNCLAS HELSINKI 670

FRANKFURT FOR FRDCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ETRA, EAIR, ETRN, FI

SUBJECT: STRIKES CRIPPLE FINNISH SHIPPING

1. LAST FEW DAYS IN FINLAND MARKED BY EXPANDING LABOR STRIFE. IN ADDITION TO STRIKE OF FOOD PROCESSING WORKERS (HELSINKI 664) VARIOUS SHIPPING UNIONS ARE EITHER ON STRIKE OR ABOUT TO BEGIN STRIKES. TELEPHONE INSTALLATION PERSONNEL ARE ON STRIKE AS WELL AS BROADCASTING INDUSTRY TECHNICIANS WHICH HAS CURTAILED RADIO AND TV PROGRAMMING. FINNAIR PILOTS THREATEN A BAN ON OVERTIME BEGINNING APRIL 6 WHICH WOULD SHARPLY CURTAIL FINNAIR SERVICES.

2. FOUR SEAMEN'S UNIONS HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE MIDDAY MARCH 29. STRIKE PRECIPITATED BY REFUSAL OF CAPTAINS
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AND MATES UNION TO ACCEPT PROPOSED REVISIONS OF

OVERTIME COMPENSATION. THREE OTHER UNIONS HAD ACCEPTED MEDIATION PROPOSAL BUT EMPLOYERS HAD MADE THEIR OFFER CONDITIONAL ON ACCEPTANCE BY ALL PARTIES. SAME ISSUE PLAGUES TALKS WITH ICEBREAKER CREWMEN WHO WILL JOIN STRIKE THIS EVENING, APRIL 2. TOMORROW, APRIL 3, LONGSHOREMEN GO ON STRIKE AFTER OVER 80 PERCENT OF THEIR MEMBERSHIP REJECTED CONTRACT PROPOSAL IN UNIONWIDE VOTE. LONGSHOREMEN ARE COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED GROUP WITHIN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC-LED TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION AND THEIR STRIKE IS LARGELY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED.

3. SEAMEN'S STRIKE HALTED MOST SHIPPING IN AND OUT OF FINNISH HARBORS. ICEBREAKER AND LONGSHOREMEN STRIKE WILL MEAN ALMOST TOTAL STANDSTILL. LARGE FOREIGN FLAG CAR FERRIES WHICH DO NOT NEED ICEBREAKER ASSISTANCE WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE (I.E., TO AND FROM SWEDEN) BUT WILL REPRESENT SMALL FRACTION OF NORMAL TOTAL. TOP EMPLOYER SOURCE BELIEVES TWO WEEKS WILL BE NEEDED TO RESOLVE MARITIME STRIKES. HE ALSO PREDICTS END TO FOOD PROCESSING STRIKE NEXT WEEK.

4. SHIPPING STRIKE HAS ALREADY AFFECTED SOME MAJOR EXPORTERS WHO HAVE NO SPARE STORAGE FACILITIES. WOOD AND PAPER MANUFACTURERS -- AND ONE HOME APPLIANCE MANUFACTURER -- HAVE ALREADY ISSUED LAY-OFF WARNINGS TO SEVERAL THOUSAND WORKERS. AUSTAD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, SHIPS, INDUSTRY, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 APR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976HELSIN00670
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760126-0192
From: HELSINKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197604105/aaaadlvb.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: oatisao
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUN 2004 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <27 SEP 2004 by oatisao>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STRIKES CRIPPLE FINNISH SHIPPING
TAGS: ELAB, ETRD, EAIR, ETRN, FI
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006